(b) if so, the details of the draft;

(c) whether the price of petrol will be less than their current sale price if the above products are brought under the policy of deregulation; and

(d) if so, the details of such reduction in prices of petrol and diesel?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (d) No decision has been taken to deregulate the consumer prices of Petrol and Diesel.

The quantum of price reduction in respect of Petrol and Diesel, as a result of deregulation would vary from time to time, in line with the movements in international oil prices, commercial considerations and market conditions.

Availability of cooking gas in Orissa

178. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the domestic cooking gas distributors are creating artificial scarcity of gas and charging more prices for gas cylinder; and

(b) whether Government would ensure the availability of cooking gas as per the requirement in Orissa?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have reported that at present, there is no overall shortage of LPG in the country, including the State of Orissa and LPG supplies to distributors are being made by the OMCs through indigenous production and imports in accordance with the genuine demand of customers registered with their LPG distributors.

OMCs have reported that they have supplied 103.60 Thousand Metric Tonnes (TMT) of domestic LPG in the State of Orissa during April to December, 2008 as against 101.28 TMT of domestic LPG during the corresponding period of last year.

OMCs have not detected any cases of creating artificial scarcity by any of their distributors. However, OMCs have detected 102 established cases of overcharging of LPG against their LPG distributorships in the country, out of which 3 cases were established in the State of Orissa during the period April, 2008 to December, 2008. Action against all the erring distributorships was taken as per provisions of Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG)

Black marketing of LPG cylinders in Delhi

179. MS. MABEL REBELLO:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL/GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that there is rampant black marketing of LPG cylinders in the capital city, Delhi;

(b) whether some raids were conducted by Government to assess the enormity of this menace; and

(c) if so, the details thereof, inter-alia indicating the action plan of Government to effectively control this menace?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (c) The possibility of blackmarketing/ diversion of subsidized domestic LPG cylinders by some unscrupulous elements cannot be ruled out due to the wide gap between the retail price of LPG for domestic use and the market price for commercial LPG.

OMCs have detected 16 cases of diversion of LPG by their LPG distributorship in the NCT of Delhi during the period April, 2008 to December, 2008. Action against the erring distributors was taken as per provisions of Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG)/ Distributorship Agreement.

In order to stop blackmarketing/ diversion of domestic LPG cylinders, the Government has enacted "Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Regulation of Supply and Distribution) Order, 2000" and formulated "Marketing Discipline Guidelines, 2001" which provides for penal action against LPG distributors indulging in diversion/ blackmarketing of LPG.

Whenever OMCs receive complaints, these are investigated and if the /complaint is established, suitable action is taken against the LPG distributor(s) in /accordance with the provisions of the Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG). MDG provides for following action against the distributor:-

- Fine of Rs. 20,000 plus the price of LPG diverted at commercial rates for 1st offence.
- Fine of Rs. 50,000 plus the price of LPG diverted at commercial rates for 2nd offence.
- Termination of the distributorship for 3rd offence.

In addition to the action taken by the OMCs, State Governments are empowered under the LPG (Regulation of Supply & Distribution) Order, 2000 promulgated under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to take action against blackmarketing/diversion of domestic LPG. Similarly, the Weights and Measures Departments of the States / UTs initiate legal action against those LPG distributors found blackmarketing/diversion of LPG cylinders. The State Governments have been alerted from time to time to take steps against the biackmarketing/diversion of domestic cylinders for unauthorized usage.

Government have issued advertisements cautioning the public that use of domestic LPG for non-domestic purposes is illegal, dangerous and against national interest. Through these advertisements, cooperation of the general public has also been sought to report any irregularity / malpractice to the OMCs.

The officials of OMCs carry out random checks at distributors godowns, delivery points, as well as en-route to ensure that no misuse takes place. The distributors of OMCs are under strict instructions to check the weight of cylinders at their godowns before delivery, and only cylinders with the specified weight are to be delivered to the customers. The distributors have also been instructed to ensure that the seals are verified & shown to the customers at the time of delivery. In case any under-weight cylinder is received by the customer, such cylinders are replaced free of charge by the OMCs.

OMCs have introduced different colours for domestic and non-domestic LPG cylinders for controlling the diversion of domestic LPG for unauthorized use.

Shortage of cooking gas

180. SHRI SAMAN PATHAK:
SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR:
Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) what measures Government has taken or is contemplating to take to meet the shortage of cooking gas in the country; and

(b) the reasons for shortage of LPG?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) and (b) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have reported that at present, there is no overall shortage of LPG in the country and LPG supplies to distributors are being made by the OMCs through indigenous production and imports in accordance with the genuine demand of customers registered with the LPG distributors.

OMCs have supplied 7885.1 Thousand Metric Tonnes (TMT) of domestic LPG in the country during the period April, 2008 to December, 2008 as against 7521.2 TMT of domestic LPG during the corresponding period of last year, showing a growth rate of 4.83%.

As on 11.02.2009, OMCs have reported a backlog of few days in LPG supplies in certain States in the country due to a combination of factors *viz.*, spurt in demand, strike by oil sector officers association, strikes/bandhs/hartal by various parties in some States etc. Government has advised OMCs to liquidate the backlog in the States by operating the bottling plants on holidays and during extended hours. All the LPG distributors have also been advised to effect the deliveries on Sundays and holidays also. The backlog is expected to be cleared by the end of February, 2009.

Malpractices by gas agencies

181. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that diversion of domestic cooking gas cylinders for commercial uses continues unabated in the country;

(b) the number of such cases detected by the public sector petroleum companies during 2008, company-wise; and

(c) the action taken against the gas agencies and their employees involved and further action taken to end this and other malpractices being indulged into by the gas agencies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL): (a) to (c) The possibility of blackmarketing/ diversion of subsidized domestic LPG cylinders by some unscrupulous elements cannot be ruled out due to the wide gap between the retail price of LPG for domestic use and the market price for commercial LPG.

Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have detected 521 cases of diversion/ blackmarketing of LPG by their LPG distributorships in the country during the period